

4 December 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Roger Jones
Assistant Director for Legislative Reference
Bureau of the Budget
Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT: Intelligence Medal

1. In our talk the other day, you asked for further explanation why the Director of Central Intelligence desires to have the President authorize a medal for outstanding service in the field of intelligence when we have already obtained an amendment to the Executive Order for the Medal for Freedom which permits that medal to be granted by the Secretary of Defense even in periods outside of wartime or emergency.

2. The Director of Central Intelligence has determined that such a medal would be appropriate and has recommended that the President authorize it for several reasons. In the first place, with the establishment of this Agency in its present position in Government, recognition has been given that intelligence is a major field of its own. General Smith has called it a "fourth service", referring to the Army, Navy and Air Force as the other three. Each of these has not only the highest medal available to all, but separate medals recognizing outstanding achievement in the traditions of each of the services. The Director feels that those who serve in the intelligence field are entitled to similar recognition. Indeed, there is greater justification for special recognition in the intelligence field due to the fact that the field is by its nature one in which outstanding achievement does not become publicly known. Military exploits are normally well publicized and in themselves give stature and recognition to the individual. The greater the intelligence contribution, the more sensitive it tends to be with the ensuing impossibility of public recognition.

3. Military medals or the Medal for Freedom granted by the Secretary of Defense do not fill the gap. As an example, many officers and employees of OSS were decorated during the war, some for unique contributions or for outstanding bravery in solitary or extra-hazardous circumstances in the intelligence field. As the citations and background information were highly classified, there is no indication of whether the medal was given for administrative achievement, inventive skill or combat. Peacetime has

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made the situation more difficult in that the Medal for Freedom is the only one available to our civilians.

4. There is special hardship on two classes of people. Those who leave prosperous positions in private life at considerable sacrifice and work with nothing to show at the end but a period of service in Washington. Not even their families know about their work. Even if they could be given the Medal for Freedom or military medals it would be fairly meaningless, whereas if they do truly outstanding work in the field of intelligence it should be recognized. The other group where this problem is easy to demonstrate is the large number of people drawn from academic and professional pursuits to assist in intelligence. This type of intellectual competence is essential. These are people who are not necessarily looking for high monetary rewards, but who, for stature in their chosen fields depend on recognition of the quality of their work. Yet once again in intelligence their contribution cannot be studied by their fellow intellectuals and they could spend their lives here with no opportunity to demonstrate their worth. One of these might, through exercise of his intellectual ability, contribute a truly outstanding accomplishment to the national security through the intelligence field. The same is true in one degree or another of all those we hope will enter intelligence as a career. Restricting this medal to those accomplishments of extraordinarily high caliber will make it a recognition which will assure the wearer that while the public will not know what he has done, the public will know that he has served his country ably and well in his chosen field.

5. A final point arises out of the fact that the Medal for Freedom can be granted only for accomplishments performed outside the continental limits. It is true that some of the more startling and striking intelligence accomplishments have been and will be made outside the country, but it is probable that the most significant contributions will be made here in Washington.

6. In summary then, we feel that no existing medal is available for proper recognition of high performance in the intelligence field and that this is a field which deserves special high level public recognition.

LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

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